

REMARKS

Status of the Claims

Claims 1-6 are pending, with claims 1 being independent. Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the outstanding rejections in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1 and 5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as purportedly unpatentable over Petzl (U.S. Patent No. 5,432,984) in view of Anderson (U.S. Patent No. 5,438,734). Applicants respectfully disagree with the rejection; therefore, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

The present invention addresses the problem of the need for a buckle which allows easy removal and insertion of a fastened strap, such as a safety strap used in dangerous work at great heights. Such a safety strap requires strength at the connections of the straps, to overcome any weakness in the axial loading.

The Office states that the difference between the buckle of Petzl and that of the present invention is the lack of the gap in the upper frame for the passage of a strap, but that it would have been obvious to the skilled artisan to modify the buckle of Petzl so that a lateral side of the upper frame has a gap. The strap of the present invention, unlike that of Petzl, is easily removable yet strong. Petzl does not allow such removal as the whole end of the strap of Petzl must be laced through the buckle.

Applicants submit that this modification would not have been obvious to one of skill in the art, as this difference is an important one, which greatly improves the functioning of

the presently claimed buckle over the buckles of the cited references. Also, the skilled artisan would not have combined Anderson with Petzl. Anderson does not remedy this deficiency in Petzl. Anderson uses twin G-shaped frames which would not be effective as a safety strap connection. Anderson presents a buckle which has both frames interrupted by a gap. The gap [(26)] of Anderson is not suitable or even usable for the buckle of safety strap, such as that used during climbing and working at great heights. Because of the design of the buckle of Anderson, it would not allow for full safety during manipulation of the strap. Accordingly, it would not be combined with the strap of Petzl to result in the present invention.

Claims 2, 3, and 6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as purportedly unpatentable over Petzl in view of Anderson and further in view of Reiter (U.S. Patent No. 1,997,653). The comments above regarding Petzl in view of Anderson apply here to the rejection of dependent claims 2, 3, and 6, and Reiter does not remedy the deficiencies of Petzl and Anderson. Further, it appears the Office did not provide comments as to how Reiter applies to the subject matter of claims 2, 3 and 6.

Accordingly, for at least the above-described distinctions it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claims 1-6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 be favorably reconsidered and withdrawn.

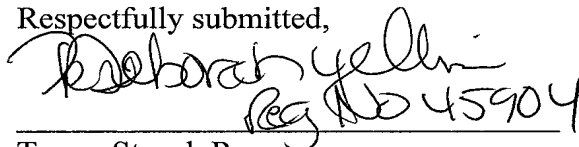
CONCLUSION

If there are any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response, and please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket #103911.B900002).

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Respectfully submitted,

Handwritten signature of Teresa Stanek Rea in cursive script.

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